

Involving Employees in the Public Education Campaign

Your employees can be a valuable part of the public education process. Often, their opinions and ideas can become an integral part of a campaign. Include your employees in the entire process. When trying to figure out where employees fit into the campaign, remember three important steps: educate, involve, and reward.

Educate Employees

- Bring employees on from the beginning. By including employees from the initial formation of your campaign to its conclusion, you will form a dedicated team willing to put forth the effort necessary for success.
- Explain the challenge to employees. It is important for everyone to fully understand the need for action. They will be able to use this background information to more effectively promote the campaign. Consumers' lack of knowledge about pesticide use may affect the environment, their personal health, and their families and friends. Illustrate the importance of the campaign by explaining how it will directly affect consumers' lives.
- Specify the employee role. Part of developing a team to work on the campaign is establishing roles for each member. Employees need to feel a sense of ownership in projects.

Whether it is a simple task or a complex assignment, employees will feel important to the success of the program if they have a specific responsibility.

- Avoid being redundant or overloading people with messages. Do not make your employees feel incompetent by repeatedly feeding them the same messages and information. Employees also may become frustrated if they feel overloaded.
- Communicate actively with employees. Relay messages in face-to-face meetings. Whenever possible provide written materials as backup. Let employees know that you have an open door and that they can approach you at any time with questions, concerns, or new ideas.

Involve Employees

- Allow employees to take part in the creation of the campaign and campaign elements. Involving employees from all levels of the district in the creation and planning of the campaign will increase overall support. Through direct involvement, employees will feel they are contributing valuable input into the program. This in turn will positively affect the amount of dedication and effort that each employee gives to the campaign.

- Assigning tasks (no matter how small) to employees gives them ownership. Making employees realize that they are valuable to the district and the campaign can easily be achieved by assigning each a specific task. Any amount of responsibility will let them know that their contribution is valued and respected, and this will give each person more reason to believe in the program.
- Give frequent updates. Don't just unveil a program and then let communications drop. Keep employees "in the loop" to maintain the initial levels of excitement and involvement. Provide weekly or monthly district-wide updates on overall status and progress. It may be a good idea to set a schedule of regular meetings with employees.
- Post a bulletin board that shows campaign progress. Tell employees the number of brochures distributed or the number of presentations made. Everyone will be interested to learn how their individual contributions affected the overall results.
- Encourage employees to share ideas. Employees at all levels can make contributions that will enhance the campaign. One new idea may generate more ideas. Encourage teamwork.
- Remember to set a good example for employees. Be enthusiastic about the program. Management bears the responsibility to "sell" the program to

employees. Share positive experiences you have encountered on the campaign with your employees to make them curious and interested.

Reward Employees

Recognize employee contributions to the campaign. This can be done in several ways:

- Identify employees who made exceptional efforts or successfully completed their tasks. This can be included in regular updates, such as district memos or newsletters.
- Acknowledge employees' special achievements at staff meetings or other district meetings that aren't related to the campaign.
- Present small gifts or awards to employees who contributed ideas and suggestions that were implemented as part of the campaign.
- Set goals for the program that can be achieved through the combined effort of all employees, and host a barbecue for employees and their families when that goal is achieved.
- Provide food at your campaign meetings. Serving sweet rolls at a breakfast meeting, sandwiches during lunchtime gatherings, or cookies and soda for an afternoon planning session can boost the morale of employees and may make them more willing to participate.

Public Education Campaign Checklist for Employees

Before beginning any new campaign, make sure to include employees in each step of the planning and execution. Use this checklist to incorporate the three-step philosophy described in the workbook.



1. Educate Employees

- ☐ Involve employees in initial planning
- ☐ Explain background problems to employees
- ☐ Include employees in problem-solving planning
- ☐ Show employees why they should care about the new campaign
- ☐ Provide employees with a complete understanding of the program and information to complete their specified role
- ☐ Convey clear and concise message points to employees
- ☐ Relay messages in face-to-face meetings whenever possible
- ☐ Provide written materials to employees when meetings are not possible
- ☐ Keep an open-door policy

2. Involve Employees

- ☐ Allow employees to take part in the creation of campaign and campaign elements
- ☐ Assign tasks to employees, no matter how small, to give them ownership
- ☐ Schedule regular meetings to keep employees updated
- ☐ Provide employees frequent status reports
- ☐ Post a progress or status report
- ☐ Have a party or barbecue when goals are achieved
- ☐ Encourage employees to share ideas throughout the campaign
- ☐ Reinforce teamwork with participation from everyone
- ☐ Set a good example: remain enthusiastic and motivated
- ☐ Keep an open-door policy

3. Reward Employees

- ☐ Highlight employees who have put in exceptional effort in meetings, memos or in the newsletter
- ☐ Acknowledge employees' special achievements at staff meetings that aren't related to the campaign
- ☐ Present small gifts/awards to those employees whose ideas were included in the campaign
- ☐ Offer a few hours of time off when employees volunteer for extra activities
- ☐ Arrange for food to be served at campaign meetings
- ☐ Create an employee appreciation event at the end of the campaign
- ☐ Acknowledge employees' contributions with personalized certificates
- ☐ Keep an open-door policy